

First Peter

Bible Commentary 2021

by

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Chapter 1

1:1

Peter addressed his audience as "*strangers scattered*" into different places. If we meditate on this verse we can learn a lot from Peter's choice of words. It is not only Peter we are hearing. The Holy Spirit called these Christians strangers scattered over the world. I think we should try to understand what this description of these Christians meant.

The Lord Jesus taught his disciples they were not "of this world". Read **John 15:19**.

The world is a system which includes government, business, and society built in rebellion against God. It is a system that copies God but turns his character upside down and inside out. These are the kingdoms of the world which belong to Satan. John described this world system as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life in **1 John 2:16**.

Christians are strangers in this world system. We are called to act as salt and light in this system. Some are called out of the world system completely to act as gifts to the church and wash the feet of the saints. These are gifts to the church who give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word. For the most part Christians live and work within the framework of the world system. Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father in **John 17:15** that we would not be taken out of the world but protected from the evil of this Antichrist system.

We are strangers living in this world. Just like Jesus our kingdom is from another place. Our home is not located in the current world system which is based on idolatry, covetousness, pride, ambition, and greed. Our home is another place which is based on righteousness, holiness, love, and purity.

Not only are we strangers but we have also been scattered. Early Christians were scattered everywhere even when this was against their will. More than likely it was their desire to be settled and have a home, family, and grow old taking care of themselves and their families. This was not the fate of these early Christians, and it is not the fate of those who live godly in Christ Jesus. (**2 Timothy 3:12**).

We are scattered to the wind like seeds in a plowed field because this is the most effective way the entire world can be reached with the gospel. The Lord Jesus sends the gospel out into the world

through the hearts of believing, obedient Christians. It is not gospel tracts Jesus hands out on the street. It is people. It is people filled with the Holy Spirit, who hold within themselves the precious deposit of eternal life. We are holy vessels filled with a glorious infusion of eternity. This eternal life within us is carried to one person after another by Christians. It is not carried by books, pamphlets, or tracts. It is carried by people who lay down their lives every day for the truth. We are the testimony of Jesus. His words are inscribed on our hearts and those words come out of our mouth, in our attitudes, reactions, and in our daily relationships with people in the marketplace, workplace, and on the street. We are God's letter to this generation.

We are strangers scattered for the purpose of spreading the fragrance and aroma of Christ Jesus wherever we go. Don't get too comfortable wherever you may find yourself.

It is our tendency to get comfortable and want to put down roots. The Lord will use persecution from unbelievers if he has to get the church moving. He allowed widespread persecution in the early church to scatter these strangers all over the known world. Eventually these same methods are employed over and over again so that Christians will pour out their life. We are vessels to be poured out. We are not to be put on the shelf to be admired or hoarded. Our lives are to be poured out for the salvation of others. We are saved in order that we too may die that others may have eternal life.

This dying is a daily process of taking up our cross, denying ourselves, and keeping our heart fixed on Jesus. We are united with him in death, burial, and resurrection. We die daily so that others may receive eternal life and live forever with us and the Father.

We are strangers scattered throughout the earth, moving on the surface of this planet with one purpose: the gospel, the good news – Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and receive eternal life.

1:2

Beginning in Genesis we are taught by God through example and instructions that the way to receive forgiveness is by the shedding of blood. The first example is when God himself killed animals to provide coverings for Adam and Eve after they sinned and became naked before God and themselves.

The blood of animals sacrificed on an altar is at the heart of Old Testament ordinances for the forgiveness of sins. This did not begin at the law given by Moses but went back to Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, and all those who followed in the faith of Abraham. God's kingdom order in obtaining salvation and forgiveness from the penalty of sin is the shedding of blood.

Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God and by shedding his blood at Calvary we obtain eternal redemption and forgiveness of sins. The blood of animals was a temporary religious system and shadow pointing toward the ultimate blood sacrifice. (**Hebrews 9:13**). This blood sacrifice of Jesus is set forth by the heavenly Father to provide for the propitiation of sins. (**Romans 3:25**).

The specific wording of "*sprinkling of the blood*" goes back to the original Passover Israel had in Egypt before the Exodus. On the same night the death angel went through Egypt and killed the firstborn children of the Egyptians the Jewish people put the sprinkling of the lamb's blood on the doorpost of

their houses. God demonstrated that it is through the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb that we escape God's wrath and receive forgiveness of sins. (**Hebrews 11:27-28**).

We should take this scripture to heart. The Holy Spirit told us through Peter that we are chosen by the foreknowledge of God to be sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit. He applies the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ to us. It is God who applies the shed blood of Jesus Christ to our lives. It is our proper response to believe in the work Jesus accomplished for us at Calvary. All those who believe in what the Lord Jesus did escape from God's wrath. All those who reject Jesus owe justice their blood for sin. God is just; he is also the justifier of those who believe the gospel. Read **Ephesians 1:7** and **Colossians 1:14**.

1:3

Even the enemies of Jesus acknowledged a doctrine of resurrection though they may not have believed in it. When the Sadducees cross examined Jesus it was with the doctrine of the resurrection which they did not believe. It is interesting we have so much information from the Lord Jesus about the truth of resurrection in response to men who did not believe in it themselves.

Not only did the enemies of Jesus acknowledge the doctrine of a resurrection at the last day but also the friends of Jesus spoke of this. When Jesus came to Mary and Martha after Lazarus died. He challenged them about resurrection before he raised Lazarus from the dead. They acknowledged they believed in a general resurrection at the last day. Jesus did not correct them in regards to this belief in a last day resurrection. He pointed to himself as the resurrection in the present tense. Where Jesus is there is resurrection life and power. This shows us that resurrection is not a doctrine but the person of Jesus. (**John 11:25**).

From reading the New Testament we find the resurrection discussed by unbelievers, believers, but most of this conversation was in regard to a religious doctrine of some distant future event. When Jesus spoke to Martha he brought all of the truth of the future event and the truth of Bible doctrine into the immediate, present tense within himself. He is resurrection and life. He proved this by raising Lazarus from the dead.

We learn that resurrection is not just an idea or a doctrine but is tied up with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Jesus went to his crucifixion he said the Father gave him power to lay down his life and power to take it up again. Jesus therefore has power over life and death. He proved this when he died on the cross. He committed himself completely to his heavenly Father and completed the work of redemption and salvation for us. He then rose from the dead on the third day.

Some people in those days did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Paul had to combat this in his own preaching ministry. In **1 Corinthians 15** he laid out the teaching of resurrection using simple illustrations of life and death in the physical world which we can see and understand. Also, Paul's used the logic that if the resurrection is not true then Christ did not rise from the dead. If Christ did not rise from the dead then our faith is in vain. The entire Christian faith rests on the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely essential and is the foundation of our faith as Christians. If there is no resurrection then there is no hope and no faith.

But Christ is risen from the dead, hallelujah! He made sure there were witnesses to his death, burial, and resurrection. These witnesses were the disciples who followed him and those who put their faith in him. They gave their lives for the truth that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. (**2 Timothy 2:8**).

It is by faith in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ we are saved and receive eternal life. Sometimes people may wonder how much does a man have to know in order to be saved. At the least a man should know that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and that he was raised from the dead on the third day. (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**).

1:4

Inheritance is introduced early in the Bible when God promised Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan. This promised land was the inheritance of Abraham's descendants.

Abraham had more than one descendant. The descendants of God's promise came through his son Isaac. These descendants inherited the land of Canaan when they were led into the land under Joshua. However, we know from the New Testament that Abraham not only had physical descendants but also spiritual descendants. The Bible teaches us we are the children of Abraham if we have the same faith in God Abraham had.

To these spiritual descendants God also promised an inheritance. This inheritance is mentioned by Peter as "*incorruptible, undefiled, fadeth not away*". In other words, this is an eternal inheritance.

Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all his possessions and follow Him. He promised the rich young ruler if he did this he would have treasure in heaven. (**Luke 18:22**). Also, Jesus taught us to store up treasures in heaven. He said where our treasure was there would our heart be also. It is important to understand that emphasis on earthly treasure is the opposite of what Jesus taught. Jesus did not teach we should invest in earthly treasures but in heavenly treasures. Read **Matthew 6:19-21**.

The emphasis in the gospel is on the heavenly inheritance which is incorruptible and does not fade away. Focusing on temporary treasure on earth is putting our focus on what is temporary and fading away. Paul wrote about the temporary in **2 Corinthians 4:18**. When men who claim to speak for God only focus on temporary things ask yourself the question: where is the man's heart? Is it on heaven? Is it on the earth? If a man's heart is set on earth he is not speaking for God but for himself. A man who speaks for God will point you to heaven and to what is eternal and invisible.

Some people are preoccupied with whether or not a Christian can lose their salvation. I think it is well established in the Bible that if a man is born again then he is in the Father's hands and no one can take him out of the Father's hands. God will carry on to completion the good work he started in us. I would add to this I think it is possible a Christian can have loss of inheritance. There is a difference between salvation and inheritance. The Lord wants to give us inheritance as well as salvation.

When speaking to the Ephesians Paul made it clear that Christians who live like the world and follow a lifestyle of the world lose inheritance. (**Ephesians 5:5**).

We should live in accordance with who we are. This is only possible by knowing you belong to Christ and are united with Christ in crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. It is through our complete identification with Jesus that the Holy Spirit moves in us to will and do according to God's will. We are set free from the power of sin by the Holy Spirit as we abide in the finished work of Christ. Our minds can be easily distracted away from this fact especially in today's world where there are constant distractions through entertainment, video, and audio. Our senses, our minds, are overwhelmed today by the flood of video and audio through TV and the internet.

It is important for us to refocus on the basic Christian faith. The basic foundation of what we believe is the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will move us into experiencing oneness with the eternal accomplishments in Christ if we allow him and if we are willing to submit to God. The Lord is as close as our acknowledgment that we have sinned and that we need a Savior. Turn from self and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. He died so we can live in eternity with him.

1:5-12

It is amazing that angels are interested in man's salvation. Our salvation reveals to them more about the God they serve. It demonstrates God is just and that he is the justifier of those who have faith in Christ Jesus. This scripture confirms the existence of angels and that they are preoccupied with those who are saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Salvation is not just a New Testament idea. Salvation did not begin with the book of Matthew. All of the prophets pointed toward the plan of God in redeeming mankind through faith in Jesus Christ. This plan is revealed all the way back in the garden of Eden when God said that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. This was a prophecy from God about the great plan of God's salvation through his Son Jesus Christ.

We can see this salvation prophesied in the lives of the prophets. There were many pictures of salvation. Consider the story of Abraham and Isaac. Think about how God asked him to sacrifice his only son of promise, Isaac, and how Abraham reasoned that God would raise him from the dead. (**Hebrews 11:19**). This is pictured in the ordinance of baptism. (**1 Peter 3:18**).

Some of the clearest prophecies of salvation through Jesus Christ were in Isaiah. In Isaiah 53 we see a description of the Lord Jesus on the cross in his death, burial, and resurrection.

Unfortunately many teach that when a person becomes a Christian that it is a step towards self improvement or living a good life. It is true that being a Christian is a good life, but not in the same way the world understands goodness. The Christian life includes hardship, sorrow, temptation, and trials. The Lord allows problems and challenges in the life of a Christian for the purpose of purifying our faith so we may bring glory to God. Our lives bring glory to God when we endure hardship like the prophet Job.

We often do not see reasons to rejoice when hardships confront us. However, Peter said we can rejoice because this is the material God uses to make us complete in our faith. We do not need to be afraid of hard times because God is still in control. The Lord is on the throne and he will not allow us to be tempted above that which we can bear. (**1 Corinthians 10:13**).

Finally, we can rest in the fact that our salvation is secure by God. Each day when we wake up and look up to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith we are secure in our salvation. Each day when our heart is fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ we are secure in our salvation. We do not need to fear anything in this world could separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are secure in our salvation because salvation is the work of Christ and the work was completed at Calvary. We can rest in the work Jesus Christ did for us.

We enter this rest by faith in the Lord Jesus. We enter by faith and we continue by faith in Christ. We are rooted and built up in Jesus. Those who turn aside to religious systems along with faith in Christ fall from grace. We can only continue as long as we continue only with Jesus. If we have Jesus we have everything and all we need for life and godliness.

1:13-16

God's people are called to be holy. What does this mean? What does holiness mean?

I think we can at least assume that this means we should be serious about clean living. We can assume at the least we should not be living in sexual immorality, drunkenness, or living recklessly.

Holy living will take focus, concentration, and serious thinking. We are encouraged in the Bible to bring our thoughts under control. We should recognize patterns of thinking that contradict God's word. Recognize the pattern of lies and tear it down.

It is amazing how strenuous this process can be, but if you ask the Lord for help I guarantee he will place you in circumstances which will bring unbiblical patterns of thinking out in the open. The Lord exposes it and then we need to deal with it by humbling ourselves, confessing we are wrong and God is right. God is always right. The Bible is always true and right. If what we think or society and culture thinks in any way contradicts the Bible then the Bible is right and we are wrong. There is plenty of wrong right now with the way Americans think. Our country is on a fast track to complete Bible ignorance and rebellion against God in every aspect.

Perhaps this is why the Lord wants me to write these Bible lessons. I am taking apart the Bible in small bits to chew on it and process it. We should learn what God expects of us. God made us and that means he owns us: body, soul, and spirit. We are God's. Our body and mind do not belong to us; it was given to us by God. Everything we have and everything we are belongs to God. God has every right to demand that we live holy lives.

Since there is so much confusion surrounding holiness in the Christian life it is a good idea to attempt to define what "holiness" is NOT.

Holiness is not wearing a dress, a covering, or not wearing make up. This is NOT holiness. Holiness is not staying away from the TV, the Internet, or movies. Holiness is not staying away from unbelievers or heathen people. Holiness is not trusting in our good works to please God.

What is holiness then? To understand what holiness is we need to look at Jesus. He didn't just stay away from sin but he overcame the sin in this world by living a life of such goodness he could not be touched by it.

Holiness is knowing God is a real person and that his eyes are on me at all times. With this knowledge my life will automatically be clean, pure, and morally upright.

Holiness is loving the Lord with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength. This is impossible unless I am completely filled with the Holy Spirit. We can only be holy if the Holy Spirit is living and abiding in us. We cannot be holy in our strength or willpower.

Holiness is a result of fixing our spiritual eyes on Jesus every day. Holiness comes as we gaze on the Lord Jesus Christ and on his finished, completed work on Calvary. As we behold the Lamb of God we are transformed from glory to glory and from strength to strength.

Our lives are not changed by actions so much as by looking on the Lord Jesus. We are transformed from the inside out by the inner working of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God on our spirit. We are born again in our spirit by the Holy Spirit, and then he teaches us how messed up our opinions and beliefs are. He straightens out all the foul attitudes and patterns of speech, thinking, and behavior.

Be holy! This is a command and our goal. We are not allowed to relax in the attainment of this goal at any time. We cannot become holy in isolation. We need brothers and sisters in Christ to sharpen us. As iron sharpens iron so one brother sharpens another. We need fellowship, prayer, God's word, and we need to find a way to use the talents God gave us to help build the kingdom of God.

1:17

There is a continuous remembrance throughout the Bible that God's chosen people are on a journey and it is from birth to death and to resurrection. This current world system is not our home, but we are only here temporarily. We are passing through this current world on our way to the true destination. Our true home lies in eternity with God and the Lord Jesus.

This trip can be called a sojourn. We are sojourning through this life, like pilgrims passing through on our way to another place. We are only temporary residents in this world.

Those who have spiritual eyes to see God's Kingdom instinctively understand and grasp how temporary this life is and their heart is not set on this temporary world. What can be seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal. However, with eyes of faith we can see into this eternal kingdom and we get glimpses of it that produce within us a longing desire. The desire for the eternal kingdom drives us on to endure our temporary hardships and tribulations here on this earth.

Peter described our sojourning as one who travels with fear. What does the word fear mean in the context of what Peter described here? I need to make it plain this fear was not the kind which harms us, torments us, or causes us to want to run. Actually, this is the kind of fear which causes us to run toward the one who inspires it. His fear produces a desire to experience more of who He is, more of His presence, more of the revelation and the knowledge of His person.

I've experienced this fear in some small way in my sojourn, and I must say it is one of the greatest blessings a Christian can ever have in their relationship with the Lord. To experience the fear of the Lord is to experience the presence of God in truth. It goes beyond emotional ecstasy to an experience

of God as a real Person who knows me, who senses me, who is watching me, who is evaluating my thoughts, reactions, words, goals, motives, everything!

To sojourn in the fear of God is to live a life of freedom from guile, hypocrisy, delusion, deception, lies, and compromise. It is a wonderful life to experience. It is pure and clean and fills my heart with great longing for my future inheritance in God's kingdom.

A man cannot truly know the Lord without having a fear of Him. One cannot encounter the God who speaks out of the burning bush and not experience a fear that causes you to immediately fall on your face because the ground you stand on is holy ground.

This is the God of truth who made Isaiah cry out in fear with the realization that he was a man of unclean lips and lived among a people of unclean lips.

This is the God who made the prophet Daniel fall down and pass out when he saw just a glimpse of his future dealings with mankind.

This is the God who punishes nations for their sins, and who forgives our sins when we humble ourselves.

He is the God who opposes and resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

The fear of the Lord is clean and pure and it brings revival to the spirit of man. To experience the fear of God is to know something of eternity in the present temporary reality.

Once a man experiences the fear of God he will sojourn differently. He no longer travels the path of this life carelessly. He considers how he lives, what he says, his attitudes, and he measures everything in his life by the unchanging truth of the Word of God.

Let us live our life with our heart set on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us speak of it often, if only to our own heart, and remember that this life is temporary. We have not even begun to live our true life yet. The best is yet to come.

1:18-19

The word "redeem" is similar to the idea of "ransom" in our modern English in that it carries the idea of someone who violently taken, or kidnapped, and now offered for ransom money. This is a mental picture that suits the idea of "redeemed" we are looking at in this verse.

To redeem means to buy back, or repurchase. It implies that the owner is purchasing something he already had in his possession.

This is an accurate way to think of our relationship with God. He owns us in the sense that he created us. To create something one automatically owns what is made. God automatically owns us because he made us.

God gave man free choice and the opportunity to choose another owner. God displayed his love and provision and protection, and yet man still chose to go with another owner. Instead of living for God man now lives for Self. We have been brought under the bondage of Self. This is the result of partaking of the Tree Of Knowledge of Good and Evil. We now are separated from God and our life in this reality is one long road of being chained to and caring for and providing for and protecting Self.

Living for self is a miserable existence. The results of living for self is that our bodies are under the law of sin and death, we are separated from God, and are now living according to the same principle as Satan. We became one in principle and essence with the Serpent when we fell in the garden of Eden.

The Lord Jesus redeemed us from this fallen condition when he died in our place on Calvary. After he died, he was buried, and then he rose again from the dead on the third day. When we renounce Self and put our faith in Christ Jesus we become participants in his death, burial, and resurrection. We become a new creation in Christ Jesus. **(2 Corinthians 5:17).**

We were redeemed. Jesus purchased us even though he owned us from the beginning.

Notice the point Peter made here is that we were not purchased with money. God did not buy us back with silver and gold.

Instead, he purchased us with the most valuable thing in the universe, and that was the blood of his only Son Jesus Christ. Peter made the comparison that Christ's blood is like the blood of the lamb the Jewish people poured out to cover their sins.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who redeemed us back to God with his own blood. He exchanged his life for ours and now we are free to live for God. We can now have a relationship with God once again through our Lord Jesus Christ. We were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

1:20-21

Jesus pointed his disciples to the heavenly Father. He made it plain everything he did and said was the result of seeing what his Father did and hearing what his Father said. Jesus was united and in perfect step with the heavenly Father. When the disciples asked about prayer he said: "Our Father who art in heaven".

Jesus pointed us to the Father.

After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven the Holy Spirit came. The Holy Spirit points us to Jesus Christ, through whom we now believe and hope in God.

Peter told us plainly that Jesus pointed us to God. Of course, we know Jesus is God. God is three in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is eternally the three in one God. In different dispensations of reality God revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He also revealed himself as Prophet, Priest, and King. These roles parallel Israel, church, and the kingdom. All three are one.

Our faith and hope is in God the Father because he raised Jesus Christ from the dead. The greatest demonstration of who God is and his glory is seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The plan for Jesus to die on a cross and be raised from the dead was settled in eternity past. It was a series of events and accomplishments destined in eternity to take place in time and space by God. God accepted men like Abraham on the basis of their faith because in eternity the Lamb of God accomplished the work of redemption. These facts must be grasped by faith and not by intellectual processing.

What God decided to do in eternity in raising Jesus from the dead happened at a specific time in history. It was an actual event which took place. Jesus had a small handful of men and women who followed him and they witnessed his death, burial, and resurrection. Their testimony of the historical facts turned the world upside down and split time in half. It changed the way history was recorded and even determined the date printed on a newspaper today.

Only God could make this impact on time and history. God manifest himself in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "*Have faith in God.*" (**Mark 11:22**).

Mankind attempts to make faith an end in itself. Faith is not a power in itself. Faith must have an object. If this object is anything other than God himself revealed by the Lord Jesus and the Bible then it is idolatry. Faith in objects or "gods of our own understanding" is idol worship and false religion.

Only faith in God as revealed through the Lord Jesus matters. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" (**John 14:6**). We cannot have God without Jesus. We can never know the Father unless we have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus is the revelation of God for us. He is the express image and revelation of God to mankind. (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).

Today people who do not believe in God or Jesus still exercise faith. Instead of putting faith in God and Jesus they instead put faith in themselves.

This faith in self will fail. It is pride which causes men to put faith in themselves. They may achieve much within the framework of the current world system, but none of what is in this current system of life will remain. It is temporary and transient.

This current world system is passing away and will soon be gone (**1 John 2:17**). The only thing that will remain is God, God's word, and our souls.

Our souls continue living in one fashion or another. A soul which did not have faith in Jesus and God in life will be separated from God forever after physical death. This separation leads this condemned soul to being cast into the lake of fire at the final judgment of God. (**Revelation 20:15**).

My prayer is that everyone who reads or hears these comments will renounce faith in self, and they will turn to Jesus with all of their heart. I pray each person will put their faith in God.

1:22

Agape is a word which describes the kind of love Jesus demonstrated when he prayed on the cross *"Forgive them for they know not what they do."* This was a love for his enemies and for those who hung him on the cross and mocked him.

What kind of love is this? It is unconditional love. It is beyond human emotion and enters the realm of divine willpower. To be capable of forgiveness and love toward enemies like this is a supernatural power from heaven. Earthly man is not capable of this noble characteristic unless empowered from heaven.

Only a soul cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ can love the way Jesus loved. A soul who has experienced God's love and forgiveness and has been infused with the Holy Spirit is in a position to love others unconditionally.

This is love without any strings attached and with no other motive than a choice for God's glory and the highest good.

Why is it that only a pure soul can love like this? A lesser soul, one that is polluted by sin and selfishness is incapable of this because of the effect of sin. Sin always makes a man selfish and complicated and hypocritical.

A pure soul, however, is capable of a love like Jesus demonstrated.

Our souls are purified through obedience to the Spirit and result in a sincere, unconditional regard, this agape love if you will, that comes from heaven. Peter exhorted the brothers to love one another with agape love.

Then he exhorted them not only to this love which comes from a pure soul and heart but also to express this love in a fervent manner.

Fervency does not waste time and is efficient in achieving its purpose. We are to love people sincerely and also quickly look for ways to express God's love in practical ways which will demonstrate most effectively God's love.

Many times this will mean we ourselves will endure hardship, humility, and suffering. So be it. This is the example before us in the life and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:23-25

In **John chapter 3** Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born again to enter the kingdom of God. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about being born again it was in the context of the Holy Spirit. Here Peter puts being born again in the context of the word of God.

A comparison is made between our temporary earthly lives and the eternal word of God. The word of God lives and abides forever. When we receive God's word into our hearts we are born again.

It is important to grasp and meditate on the brevity of our earthly lives. The importance of understanding this truth is so we will not waste the short life we have but will invest it into what really matters in eternity. Peter said here the word of the Lord endures forever. By the word of the Lord we heard the gospel preached to us and it is through hearing and believing God's word we are born again.

This word is active and alive. It gives us life. Jesus said the words he spoke are spirit and life. Hearing and believing the word of the Lord gives us eternal life and we live forever.

The work of God is this: to believe in the one whom he sent. Jesus was sent into this world to give us the truth about the Father. He is the word of God in flesh to us, and when we believe in Him we are born again. We receive eternal life by believing in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. (**John 20:31**).

Jesus said he came to give us life and life more abundantly. It is through his word and the Holy Spirit we are born again. The Holy Spirit applies the word of God to us. The word and the Spirit live in us, giving us new life, and making us into a new creation. (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

Peter may have been thinking about **Psalms 90** when he compared our life to a blade of grass. It is like a blade of grass that grows up in the morning and by the evening it is dry and withered. (**Psalms 90:5-6**).

Listen to this exhortation and meditate on our brief life. Let us apply our hearts to the wisdom of God's word. Let us believe in the words of Jesus and receive the life that lasts forever.

Chapter 2

2:1

I've heard people say you can come to Jesus just like you are. God loves you just like you are. People, however, instinctively know this is a bait and switch and it is. It is true God loves you, however, his love will not allow you to remain the way you are. It is not God's goal to leave you in the moral state you are in when you are saved.

I'd prefer not to tell people to come as they are. Instead, tell them they will change. God will do the work in them to will and to do according to his good purpose.

Getting ourselves together first and then coming to God cannot and will not happen, and it is just an excuse not to submit to the righteousness of Christ. People know that a change is required but try to do it on their own before they will pray and ask for God's help. This is trying to be saved in a backwards fashion. Once we are saved then we can set our heart on the Lord Jesus and we will change. We are changed by beholding the Lamb of God. When we look at Jesus we will be changed from glory to glory and from strength to strength.

Immediately after Peter talked about being born again by the word of God he exhorts the born again Christian to lay aside the behavior of unbelievers. These negative traits hinder spiritual growth: malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, evil speakings. These traits are cultivated in someone who is an idolater whose heart is consecrated to self, providing for self, and protecting self.

The Lord is our provider and our protector. Our work as a Christian is to be an ambassador of Christ. We are salt and light in the world. The Lord will supply our needs and protect us as we serve him in the world.

As a result, malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, slander – none of these traits are needed to live in this new life. They are weapons the unbeliever uses to survive in the world system and are no longer needed by the born again Christian.

Instead of malice we love our enemies. Instead of guile we are sincere and straightforward. Instead of hypocrisy our lives are filled with humility and honesty. Instead of envy we are glad when someone else does well and is blessed. Instead of slander we now give thanks for people and pray for them.

How do we lay these things aside? First, by recognizing if we have a problem with these items. This requires the light of God's word and the correction of the Holy Spirit. If we are unwilling to study the Word and unwilling to listen to correction we will not make progress in our spiritual walk with Jesus.

We should be willing to humble ourselves and ask the Lord to correct us, rebuke us, and get our heart in a position where we are willing to be changed by God's power and grace.

Some people do not believe they can change, but a born again Christian can definitely change from a self-centered life to a Christ-centered and others-centered life. It takes more time for some than others but we can all start today by requesting God's help and having a willingness to change.

2:2-3

Peter was not literally describing the Christians he wrote to as babies. He's not rebuking them for being young Christians.

Instead, he used the word picture of a baby drinking milk to show us how a Christian is to yearn for spiritual nourishment from the Lord. Continuing with this word picture he said "if you have tasted the Lord is gracious". The "if" here does not imply they would say the Lord is not gracious but instead means "since you know how good the Lord is, how good it tastes to receive spiritual nourishment from the Lord".

Does Peter have the Psalms in the back of his mind when he is writing his letter? (**Psalm 34:8**).

The idea of Jesus as spiritual food is all through the New Testament and is taught by the Lord Jesus also. He told his followers he was the bread of life and he was living waters. He taught people he would give them water so they would never thirst again. He told his disciples at the last supper they would eat his flesh and drink his blood.

This was doctrine in word pictures and not doctrine in literal terms. Some people try to interpret this literally so when we take communion we eat the body of Christ all over again and make it into a ritual to earn salvation.

Jesus said the words he spoke were spirit and life. When we commune with Christ in prayer and through the study of his word we enjoy spiritual food and drink. It is more than mouthing a prayer,

more than forcing ourselves to read a chapter in the bible every day. There is real communion with the Lord and touching the Lord through these activities in which our spirit is fed and refreshed.

Let us taste and see the Lord is good. Let us draw near to God like a baby draws near to the mother for milk. This is how close the Lord is to us. We can draw near to God and He draws near to us. He feeds our spirit with the bread of life and satisfies our thirsty soul with the living waters.

2:4-8

Peter quoted scripture from the Old Testament (**Psalms 118:22-23**) that pointed to the arrival of the Messiah, and this scripture the Lord Jesus himself also quoted as fulfillment of prophecy about himself. (**Matthew 21:42**).

Jesus is the foundation stone and we are living stones in a spiritual temple created by God. In this temple we are all priests and offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. This tells me that Christians do not need any human mediator between themselves and God. We have direct access to God through Jesus Christ and can be confident when we approach the throne of God's grace. (**Hebrews 4:16**).

Also, these scriptures reveal the Lord is in the process of building his temple. Paul compared the church to a body, and he also said that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit. (**1 Corinthians 6:19**). The church is the body of Christ (**Ephesians 5:30**), which is a temple.

These scriptures prophesied that people who would not believe in the Messiah when he came and instead the Messiah would be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. For those who believed in the Messiah this corner stone was precious. Those who believe become one with him. As he is a stone they also become living stones built together into a holy temple for the Lord.

It stands out to me how believers are made into the same material as the Lord. Here he was called a stone and those who believe in him are living stones. When we believe in the Lord we are truly united together with him and changed into his image and likeness. (**Romans 8:29**). This is all the work of God in us to believe and trust in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since it is God's work (**Ephesians 2:4-6**), we can have confidence that our relationship to him and eternal life is secure in his hands. (**John 10:29**). We can trust in him, and not be afraid. (**Psalms 56:3**).

2:9-10

Peter brought in more Old Testament scripture. Read **Hosea 1:10**. Paul quoted this same passage in his letter to the Romans. Read **Romans 9:25-26**.

The prophecy in Hosea pointed to the mystery of the church in which God joined the Jew and Gentile into one house of faith. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead he created something new which did not exist before.

He created the church, which consisted of Jews and Gentiles together. Read **Ephesians 2:11-14**.

Though it may be true Jesus primarily reached out to Jewish people when he was on earth he also ministered to Gentile people. Often he would go out of his way to minister to a Gentile as he did with

the demoniac in the Gadarenes. Not only that but often Jesus would exclaim in amazement to his Jewish audience at the faith of Gentiles who came to him. He provoked the Jewish people by the faith of Gentiles who came to him. This idea of provocation is picked up by Paul in his letter to the **Romans in 10:19-21**.

This church comprised of Jews and Gentiles in one body makes a peculiar people. For 2,000 years theologians have tried to figure out where being a Jew ends and where being a Christian starts or how to combine the two together or keep them separate. Some attempt to say there is no more Jew today but the church replaced the Jews. But this is clearly not the case because the apostles stated there is still a future fulfillment of prophecy for the nation of Israel.

The Lord helped me understand this through a vision I had on August 4 and 8, 2014. The Lord filled me with his Holy Spirit and told me to study the phrase "*hidden manna*" in the Bible.

As a result of Bible study and this vision I could see that God's people are one. Just like God is three in one so the people of God are three in one: Israel, church, and the kingdom. There are three people who are made into one people. We have seen Israel and the church and soon we will see the kingdom during the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

We are a peculiar people chosen and set apart by God himself. The Lord called each one of us by name and we heard his voice. We are expected to obey the voice of the Lord when he speaks to us. We are expected to fulfill God's gift and calling on our lives. Each of us has a purpose and responsibility to help build this spiritual temple. Like we read earlier in this chapter we are all living stones built together.

It is interesting how Peter kept telling them who they were. He doesn't tell them who they need to become; he told them who they were. This is true revelation from heaven: to know who you are in Christ and where you fit together in this holy temple of the Lord.

2:11-12

The old English word "*conversation*" used in this verse has a different meaning in modern English. Today "*conversation*" means to talk with someone. However, in the context of the King James Bible this word was used to mean a "*manner of living*". It means the way a man lived or his lifestyle. To paraphrase the above verse we could say "*having your manner of life honest among the Gentiles*".

Our lifestyle is to be in agreement with God's truth and therefore reflect honesty and truthfulness. We speak the truth in love, we are transparent, simple, straight forward, and sincere. Our words and lifestyle do not contain double meanings or hidden meanings but are plain and simple.

The result of living in this manner is when people accuse us of wrong doing our manner of living will testify on our behalf. If we have in the past lived a double life or men can see hypocrisy between our profession of faith and manner of living then these accusations will carry weight. Our best defense against the accusations of unbelievers is to live an exemplary life of truth and love.

Peter taught that this lifestyle is not passive but rather filled with good works which can easily be seen by anyone.

Of course, men who are determined to paint Christians in a bad light will see evil no matter what we do. Society today calls what is evil good and what is good evil. This development was foretold in scripture for how society would structure itself toward the end of the age.

However, if we follow Peter's admonition we can deflect some of the attacks of unbelievers. By living transparent lives free from hypocrisy and clinging to truth we can avoid some attacks or at least be acquitted of false charges if it comes to that.

When Peter speaks of unbelievers glorifying God I don't think he means they were going to raise their hands and say "hallelujah"!

I think what he meant was that they would acknowledge we are followers of God, even if to them this is despicable. They would not be able to deny we are children of God but would be forced to admit we are truly followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way the heathen bring glory to God by their admission of our consistent living and profession of faith in Christ.

Peter exhorted us to abstain from fleshly lusts. There is a part we must take in cooperating with the Holy Spirit to avoid temptation, and in denying the lust of the flesh. We need to make changes in our lifestyle which will help us stay away from stimulus in the world system. There are people, places, and things we need to steer clear of if we hope to live a clean life.

Fleshly lusts, if given into, will wage war against our soul. Sin will make a man's soul double-minded. A Christian has a profession of faith in God. To live contrary to this profession will produce unbelief, confusion, and pain within our soul and spirit, not to mention the effect inconsistency has on brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let us live in such a way that our words and actions agree with one another, and then we can enjoy peace of mind and heart.

2:13-17

Submission to government and the authority of man-made government structures was encouraged by Peter and Paul. Jesus told his followers to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.

Submission to authority is a biblical principle that needs context. During the time when Peter and Paul encouraged Christians to respect authority they were suffering at the hands of these governments. Christians were actively persecuted by the government at that time. These Christians were taught by the apostles to guard themselves against having an attitude of rebellion against government.

Peter showed us the purpose of government. The purpose of government is to punish evildoers and to reward those who do well. Peter taught Christians to do well and show honor and respect toward government. As a result of showing respect the government should reward Christians. I say "should" because this is the hope of a best case scenario with an anti-Christian government. We shall see in later passages in this letter Peter said if they suffer for well doing that was preferable and more honoring to God than suffering for rebellious attitudes and actions.

The goal was to teach Christians to live peacefully within the world system so we can have an opportunity to share the gospel. The goal is the spread of the gospel and this should be easier when we live in peace with government and with our neighbor.

Another reason to show respect to authority is to disprove those who accuse Christians of subversion. The accusation the religious leaders used in front of Pilate was that Jesus subverted the Roman government by claiming to be a king. The devil tries to inspire unbelievers to accuse Christians of subversion. To deflect such accusations Christians should go the extra mile in showing respect to government.

Christian leaders who oppose abortion aggressively justify protests with verses such as "*It is better to obey God rather than man*". The apostles said this when they spoke to the religious leaders and not to secular government.

Perhaps there are times we should obey God rather than human government, but I want to remember the context in which Peter and Paul lived. The Roman government was as anti-Christian and pagan as you could possibly get and the apostles did not organize political protests.

When they said they would "obey God rather than man" the context was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The religious leaders commanded them to stop preaching in Jesus' name. Instead, the apostles obeyed the Lord's command and not the religious leaders. As Christians we are the servants of God and the best way to communicate this is to show the same attitude Jesus Christ had. He gave us an example of humility and submission, and was obedient to his heavenly Father even when that meant dying on a cross.

2:18-23

Peter exhorted Christians tempted to be rebellious while suffering under government. He covered the authority structure of secular government and now put his finger on relationships closer to home.

The parallel of this servant relationship in the modern world would be employer and employee. During Peter's time he spoke directly to Christians who were slaves. They may or may not have received compensation for their work but were servants.

Peter taught a humble attitude toward authority whether the authority is secular civic authority or more personal in the work place and on the job. The attitude which Peter taught was the same attitude he observed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember the record of how Jesus washed Peter's feet? Jesus took the role of a slave and a servant. Jesus humbled himself.

The American attitude of demanding rights and standing up is the opposite of the example of Jesus and is also the opposite of what Peter taught in this letter.

We are called to humble ourselves in circumstances which are unpleasant even when people over us in authority in the workplace are unjust or unfair. We are called to humble ourselves and bear this suffering. Peter said if we take it patiently then this is acceptable with God.

Don't we want to be acceptable with God? Don't we want to please God in our daily life situations? God is at work in us to make us into the image of his Son Jesus. The purpose of this process is so that our lives will bring glory to the heavenly Father.

2:24-25

It is easy to limit these verses to only talking about spiritual healing. By doing so we never have to stress about hoping our bodies can be healed. We know with God all things are possible but we don't have to stretch ourselves to believe God can heal us today if by these verses all that is implied is spiritual healing.

Don't get me wrong. Spiritual healing, the forgiveness of our sins, is more important in the long run than physical healing.

However, consider the life and ministry of Jesus for a moment in the background of what Peter taught. Did Jesus only forgive the sins of people? He asked the question once "which is easier, to forgive sins or to heal"?

Jesus treats the whole man and not just the spiritual. He healed the sick man's body as well as the sinful man's soul. He is able to do it all. So the question arises in my mind: why would Bible teachers insist this scripture is only speaking of healing of our sins? Definitely he is talking about sins here. He draws the picture that we are sheep going astray. Sheep going astray is often a picture of a sinner. Also, he said that Jesus bore our sins in his own body in the tree.

For me it is plain that Jesus wants to heal the body as well as the soul. Of course we do not understand why one man receives healing from the Lord and others continue to languish. Only God knows why some people are healed and other people are not healed.

I firmly believe we should always pray and ask God for physical healing as well as spiritual forgiveness of sins. Many times these issues overlap and are intertwined. Jesus healed a man and then told him not to sin anymore or something worse would happen to him. He also made it clear in the case of the blind man he healed that sickness was not a direct result of this man's sins or his parent's sins. Jesus also in one instance forgave a man his sins and healed him too.

Don't put limits on what Christ accomplished through his finished work on Calvary. What Jesus did for us is, of course, most importantly the forgiveness of sins so we can receive eternal life. However, let us also believe God to heal our mortal bodies and restore us to health according to his wisdom and prudence.

Chapter 3

3:1-6

Peter continued with the theme of submission. So far we see Peter taught submission to government and employers. Now he taught submission within the home and began with the wife.

Today people rail against the idea of submission of a wife to her husband. But I'd like to make it plain: our society has it wrong. Our society calls what is good evil and what is evil good. Society has everything upside down and inside out. Do not trust the ideas promoted today: they are against God for the most part especially when it comes to defining relationships and marriage.

One reason given for the wife's submission is to benefit the husband. If the husband is unbelieving then a wife's submission is the greatest method in bringing him to faith. Remember humility and submission are recommended in the workplace and towards government. The greatest method to reach anyone for Christ is humility and submission. Why do we think we can invent a better method for reaching people than the example Jesus gave to us?

Peter encouraged wives to put the emphasis for beauty on the inward adorning of good character. Women naturally are concerned with their beauty. This is how God created women to be concerned with their beauty. Peter encouraged wives to direct this natural desire in a spiritual direction. Christian wives should focus on developing a beautiful spirit and qualities which Jesus displayed in his life. A meek and gentle spirit. Jesus said he was meek and lowly in heart. This is the example set before us.

3:7

A husband is a spiritual leader and should be constantly praying for his wife. In order for his prayers to be effective he must live a practical life of love toward his wife.

This practical love is shown when the husband understands his wife and lives together with her in accordance with this knowledge. He honors her so even though she may be in submission she does not feel less of a person in this relationship. They are spiritually equal but different in roles. He is to look for ways to honor his wife and show his understanding of her.

To understand his wife he studies her to be able to support, protect, and make her secure. This is what the husband is called to do. Even as Christ loved the church, his body, so also husbands are to love their wives.

When Peter called the wife the weaker vessel he did not say she was less of a person. This meant generally the wife is weaker physically and the husband should always be sensitive to this and look for ways to alleviate physical burdens.

Not only are they husband and wife, but are also brother and sister in Christ. They are both heirs together of the wonderful gift of eternal life. As being heirs together their relationship is one which reflects eternity and is a witness to the world of God's love and mercy shown through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Husbands are to be spiritual leaders and priests of their homes. They should initiate times of prayer and bible study in the home. He is to encourage his wife in her faith while not being overbearing.

We are to exhort one another daily as long as it is called Today. We are to help one another serve Jesus.

3:8-12

After addressing Christians in regard to submission to secular government, the workplace, and the family, Peter now turned his attention to Christians relating to one another within the church.

The first exhortation was toward unity of mind. Having one mind was something the apostle Paul taught in **Philippians 4:2** when he asked Euodias and Syntyche to have the same mind. Our mind is to be the mind of Christ Jesus! (**Philippians 2:2,5**).

This unity is described in **Acts chapter 2** when the disciples gathered together in Jerusalem to wait to be filled with power from on high.

Jesus also prayed about unity in **John chapter 17**.

This topic of unity in the church is important to our purpose, mission, and God's plan of salvation. Jesus said the world would know him by the love Christians show to one another.

Peter taught Christians not to argue or fight with other Christians. We are not to seek justice or revenge against another Christian. These instructions not only apply to our relationships with Christians but also with unbelievers. We are not to fight people or get revenge. We are not to return evil for evil. (**Romans 12:21**). Jesus taught us to love our enemies so how much more should we love our Christian family.

Scripture assures us if we live with peace toward other men we will experience a longer, extended life. Peter quoted **Psalms 34:12-15** in this passage as his text and these promises are for all time.

The question remains: Do we desire life and many good days? Do we want to see good in our lives? Then we must depart from evil, do good, seek peace. The Lord hears our prayers, but the Lord is against those who do evil and will cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

These are exceeding great and precious promises which we can rely on. These are exhortations for us to live godly lives of humility and peace. The promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus.

3:13-18

Regardless of whether or not a man is a Christian we will all suffer in this life. If it is necessary and inevitable that we suffer why not suffer for doing what is good? Why suffer for doing evil?

Yesterday I saw in the news that an upcoming famous football player was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole. This man was only in his twenties. He had not even gotten to the age of thirty yet and his life is over. There is no more hope for him. He will suffer the rest of his life for the crime of murder. The way of the transgressor is hard.

Yet it is also difficult for the Christian to live in this world system. Jesus told his followers plainly they would suffer. We see the example of Paul suffering for the gospel throughout his ministry and he spoke of this often in his letters. (**2 Timothy 3:12**).

Peter asked the question: Who would harm you if you do what is right? And yet he immediately conceded this is exactly what happens. It happened to the Lord Jesus. It happened to all of the early church and Christians. It happens today all over the world where Christians are murdered for their faith in Jesus.

In situations where we are called to suffer we find there is a silver lining. In that the situation we have an opportunity to share our testimony even to those persecute us. I remember the testimony of Richard Wurmbrand who suffered as a Christian under the communists after World War 2. He was in prison for many years because of his faith and Christian ministry. As a result, he had many opportunities to witness to his persecutors. He described the supernatural love from God that can and does fill the heart of Christians when they suffer. God enabled them to forgive and to love their enemies.

Christ Jesus is our example of suffering. If the Lord did not attempt to escape the path of suffering why are we so quick to think we will not face suffering? Suffering does not mean that you are less of a Christian or that something is wrong with your faith. Many times, in fact, it means the opposite, that God is testing your faith so that it can grow and bring honor and glory to the Name of Jesus.

Chapter 4

4:1-6

The fact Jesus suffered for us gives us the strength to also suffer. Are we better than Jesus? No, the Lord was perfect and sinless, and yet suffered. We can expect to face suffering. Christians who expect an easy life are not prepared to endure when hardship comes. It is inevitable hardship arrives, and when it does we must be ready. Endurance is inspired by our attitude and that must rest on the finished work of Christ to be successful. Endurance to the end is assured, not by willpower, but by the accomplishment of Jesus in time and in eternity.

When Peter said "*he who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin*" he means it. There is an end to the work of sin's power in the life of the believer. From the perspective of eternity sin lost its power in the life of the believer. This can be experienced as we maintain a consistent faith on the facts of Christ's work. When we rest in Christ's work we are free from our own work. Christ was at rest in His father's work and so he did not observe the religious Sabbath of the Jews. He did not have to. He was Lord of the Sabbath. In the same way, we are free from religion by resting in Christ alone. I no longer observe any seven day ordinances or rules because Christ is my ordinance and my law. Christ alone is all I need and He is all that is necessary.

I no longer live for my own will but for the will of God. In the past I lived for myself but now I live for God through faith in Christ Jesus. Peter listed the manifestation of self worship. It is a life filled with "*lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries*", and this is now behind us as believers. We no longer live like this because we are changed by the Lord Jesus. This lifestyle no longer attracts us. Unbelievers cannot understand why we no longer engage in this activity. Our lives no longer produce this fruit. It frustrates them and alarms them that we now produce righteousness, holiness, and peace. Our lives are a rebuke to them and they hate us for it.

How do they get back at us for living a holy life? They call what is good evil and what is evil good. They change darkness for light and light for darkness. They turn everything upside down and inside out.

When I say the world is turned inside out and upside down I mean this literally. We live in a system organized by an enemy. It is a copy and counterfeit of the real thing. The real thing is who God is. The world system is generally outlined as government, business, and society. These three areas are the inverted roles of the prophet, priest, and the king. The apostle John showed us the spiritual manifestation of the world system in **1 John 2** as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. I believe the spiritual symptoms also parallel the inverted roles.

People in the world do not comprehend why we do not run with them in their excess and indulgence of the sinful nature. After all, they are only doing what comes natural. That is the point exactly. A Christian is not just a natural man anymore. Yes, we are men. But we are also participants of the divine nature through faith in Jesus and are no longer desirous of the downward pull of sin and death. The law of sin and death may still attempt to exert itself through the members of the physical body, but our spirit yearns for heaven and to be free from all corrupting influences of the devil, the world system, and the carnal nature. We long to be swallowed up in a glorified body so we can reflect the light of Jesus and dwell together with God in eternity.

4:7

What a strange thing to say 2,000 years ago: *"the end of all things is at hand"*.

What was Peter talking about? Why did he say the end of all things is near? Obviously, the world has continued to go on for two thousand years after Peter made this statement.

Peter meant what he said and I believe what Peter said is absolutely the inspired Word of God.

The problem is we do not comprehend time like God. When Peter wrote that the end of all things is near he wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To God this is true: the end of all things is near. God tries in every generation to make us realize the world is passing away. This world has only so many days before it is gone. (**Psalms 90:4**).

The Lord does not measure time like us. Time was created by the Lord Jesus. It is not something he is subject to. This is a mystery but all history and the future has happened in God's mind. God knows everything as far back as time goes and as far in the future as time goes. God is all knowing.

Let's rest in the fact 2,000 years ago Peter said the end of all things is near and this is getting closer to fulfillment every second.

I am thankful as a Christian I have hope during times of change. I have an anchor for my soul. This anchor is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Jesus never changes. Time changes everything except Jesus. He is the same loving Savior, the same King of kings and Lord of lords he always was. His promises in the Bible do not change.

We are to be clear minded and self controlled so we can pray. When the world is falling apart we maintain our wits and control ourselves. This is easier said than done.

Can I overcome fear and anxiety? This is what Peter is talking about! Be clear minded and self controlled so I can pray. Peter tells me to be clear minded and self controlled so I can pray. I need to communicate and talk to Jesus during this time when the world falls apart. Why?

What about the preparations people make for the end? I think preparations are good. I think it is common sense. It is prudence to prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

However, no matter how much provision we make in the time of a disaster it is the Lord we must look to for help. There is no guarantee all the provisions we make will help us when the time comes.

What if somebody comes to my door with a shotgun and demands my dry foods? What will I do then about all the provisions I made?

I think it is good to prepare for what might happen. It is no guarantee it will help.

Our help is in the name of the Lord! (**Psalm 5:11-12**)

It will be people who pray who will survive in the crisis. When the foundations of the world shake, it is the righteous who will be surrounded by God's protection and taken care of by his provision.

During the three years of drought in Israel during Elijah's time God took care of him; fed him meat by having birds bring it to him. God miraculously supplied water and food and took care of Elijah's needs.

Didn't God warn Noah about a flood that was coming and gave him directions on how to build an ark?

Did God shut the mouths of the lions when Daniel was thrown into their den over night?

God is able to take care of his children. He promised he would do this. The question is not will God take care of us when the end of all things comes but are we ready to live by faith and pray when the end of all things comes?

The end of all things is coming whether we like it or not. It may not be tomorrow that the end of the world comes. But it is a fact that the end is coming.

Are you ready?

Are you ready to stand before God and give an account for your life? Have you asked Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior and forgive all your sins. That is the best thing you can do to prepare for the end. Get spiritually prepared by accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and learn how to serve him until He comes.

4:8-11

There is fervent passion in the love Christians have for one another. It is a fervency which exudes so much heat the world is warmed by it. Unbelievers see the smoke of its burning ascend. They know we are Christians by our love for one another.

Showing hospitality is the art of dropping everything one thinks is important in order to serve someone else. It is allowing someone to come into your house and into your heart. You are willing to sit with this person and listen to them and hear their story. They have a story to tell and we should listen carefully and with patience. To show hospitality without grudging is to be generous with our time, space, and resources. It all belongs to Jesus anyway. Don't you know at some point you might entertain angels and be unaware of it?

Speaking for God is speaking from God. We don't preach systems of philosophy. We speak from God's heart and with the authority of being his voice. We are holy vessels and carry within us a treasure to be shared with great conviction.

Serve others as serving Christ because we truly do serve Christ in whatever capacity we find ourselves in. Work with all of your heart, as unto the Lord, and not unto men. We will receive our reward from the Lord!

God's grace is expressed in manifold different facets through the lives of each individual in the church. Each man carries a gift which others in the church need. We are stewards of the gift which God gave us. We employ this gift in building the church. The church is the body of Christ and we are living stones rising into a temple of the Lord.

Each gift is special from the man teaching to the man sweeping the floor to the man standing at the door and shaking hands. We are joined together with one purpose and that is to glorify God through the Lord Jesus.

Freely we received and so let us freely give what the Lord Jesus gave us. For me, it is to take truth, internalize, and then shine it out in written and spoken words. It is for me to speak God's word as an oracle and to realize that as I speak the Lord can take my small fishes and loaves and feed the multitudes. The Lord is great and he is able to take our smallest offerings and accomplish his purpose and his plan. My life is in his hands.

We can rest in Him. We trust him to open doors so we can use our gifts as a blessing to the church. May the Name of Jesus Christ be great and glorious.

4:12

As a result of enjoying God's blessings of peace men are startled to wake up one day and encounter suffering. Suffering can come from any direction. It is God's mercy which keeps us from trials and suffering. Jesus told us to pray God would deliver us from temptation so I know it is not normal to go looking for trouble.

We live in a fallen world as a result of man's free will. As we live in this fallen world we will inevitably face trials.

Don't think it strange when suffering happens. As Christians we may get the idea we are exempt from trouble. God does set a hedge of protection around us and protects us but there are times in God's plan that the protection might come down. Remember the prophet Job and his suffering and his patience through his loss.

Job was a righteous man and suffered horribly. He did not suffer because he sinned or had a lack of faith. He suffered because there was a move in heaven between God and Satan. Job was caught in the cross fire in a spiritual battle between the Lord and Satan.

Satan prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone he can devour. Jesus told Peter, "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.*" (**Luke 22:31**).

There are times the enemy jumps the fence and gets into the yard. He slips in through an open door or a window carelessly left open through the night. Why? How?

These questions must be relinquished as secondary to the most important issue. We must be sober, vigilant, and not be surprised when we are confronted by this monster. When we wake up in the night with the hair standing on end... don't be surprised. Satan is relentless. However, remember this truth: Jesus has overcome. Jesus is victor. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Cry out to the Lord! The Lord rebukes Satan on your behalf. The Lord Jesus rebukes the devil!

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (**James 4:7**)

When you suffer don't think you are alone. Others have faced this challenge. You are not alone. Read **1 Corinthians 10:13**.

Saints in every generation were sifted. Few escaped the attack of the enemy. Do not be surprised when you suffer. Remember these trials are used by God to purify us and make our faith in Jesus stronger. All things work together for the good of those who love God (**Romans 8:28**).

4:13

The ability to rejoice during suffering does not come from willpower or understanding. It does not come from a good perspective on a bad situation. It will not arise even when we understand the Bible doctrine that God works out everything for our good and his glory.

The rejoicing is the experience of being one with Christ. (**Galatians 2:20, Romans 6**).

Whether in joy or sorrow just being with Christ is spiritual riches and joy beyond our earthly experience of happiness or sadness. (**Ephesians 1:16-19**). Joined together (**Ephesians 2:5-6**) and being one with Christ in his sufferings is more joyful than any pleasure this world can give. How is this possible?

Because the presence of God is more precious than anything we could ever experience or hope for in this temporary season of existence. The presence of God is outside of time and space, and when he calls your name (**John 10:3**) you know you will live forever with him. When he calls your name you know Jesus Christ is a real Person and He is life. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the only way to the Father. **John 14:6**.

The revelation of glory Peter mentioned hearkens back to a glimpse of this glory he saw on the mountain when Christ was transfigured (**Luke 9:28-36**) before Peter, James, and John. Peter saw a glimpse of the glorified Christ (**2 Peter 1:16-17**) on the mountain. He knew the presence of Jesus Christ was all he needed.

After the resurrection Peter could look back on his experience and it enabled him to look forward to what was coming. The revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ will be revealed to all of us one day. The Lord Jesus will return to this planet and we will see Him.

Peter called the revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ an "exceeding joy". If we are suffering with Christ now it is because we are one with Christ, and if we are one with Christ then we will see Him. We will see the revelation of Jesus Christ at his return. This is where the rejoicing comes from when we suffer now. (**2 Timothy 2:11-12**).

Jesus told Paul the grace of God was sufficient for us in sufferings (**2 Corinthians 12:9**). We do not always experience complete relief from the attack of the enemy but we can rest assured God's grace is sufficient. If we suffer we shall also reign with Christ one day. Rest assured the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to our cry. (**Psalms 34:15**)

There is joy in the presence of the Lord which the world knows nothing about (**Psalms 16:11**).

His presence and his glory are more real than anything we can know with our small minds and our limited bodies.

Eventually the Lord will give us new bodies, like his, that can withstand the presence of God and will reflect the glory of God (**Philippians 3:21**).

This is the hope we have (**1 John 3:1-3**). The Lord Jesus is returning, and He will receive us to Himself that where he is we may be also. (**John 14:3**).

If you do not long to be with Jesus ask the Lord to reveal himself to you. Cry out to the Lord until you know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. (**Philippians 3:10-11**).

4:14-16

Without understanding and insight from the Holy Spirit these verses make no sense at all. The unbeliever reads this scripture and could pull his hair out trying to understand this. Be happy when I am reproached? What is there to be happy about?

However, if you have experienced the presence of Jesus Christ and you know the Spirit of God then you should be able to grasp this. Why am I happy if I am reproached for Christ? Because I know that

the spirit of glory and of God rests upon me. When someone flips out because I am a Christian it is because the Holy Spirit is a real person. Unbelievers really do hate the Holy Spirit. He convicts them of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible also hate the Holy Spirit.

When we suffer as a Christian it is because we belong to Jesus and people can sense this. They are not able to put it into words or explain it. For them it is just a feeling of revulsion or mockery or hatred. They might think these emotions arise because they are superior intellectually. Pride fills their mind with reasons to justify the hate in their heart but the real reason for recoiling from a Christian is that the spirit of glory and of God rests on the Christian.

Peter encouraged them that they should not be ashamed when they were reproached for being a Christian. Reproach and persecution are to be expected. This was the way the world treated the Lord Jesus and we are not above our Master. We cannot expect to be treated by unbelievers in any other way than what Christ also received.

Unbelievers who reproach a Christian are not to be feared. Let us give all the glory to God for this witness of God's hand on our lives. When we are reproached for Christ then we can rejoice. It is evidence the Holy Spirit lives in us and the world can feel Him.

Paul cautioned Christians not to do anything which could bring reproach on the name of Christ. There are brothers who backslide and commit horrible sins. When Christians backslide into sin like this it not only brings reproach on themselves but also on the Lord. Let us not give the enemy occasion to blaspheme the name of Jesus.

Chapter 5

5:1

Peter exhorted his fellow elders. He identified himself as an elder in the church. He went on to list his qualifications as an eye witness to the sufferings of Christ.

The glory was the glory of the Lord Jesus when he returns to earth as King of kings. Those who are one with Christ now in his sufferings will be with him when he returns in glory as King of kings. Paul taught that we will reign and rule with Christ when he returns to earth.

How do elders lead the church? How will we reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom? The spiritual authority of God's kingdom is much different from the authority of the present world system. The world system has a hierarchy of oppression and promotion and self exaltation. The kingdom of God is much different than what we experience today with government, business, and society.

The revelation of this kingdom is already shining in the hearts of overcomers in Christ Jesus. The remnant who overcome in these last days taste the goodness of the Lord and sense the arrival of God's kingdom. We stand right now on the threshold of the kingdom of God.

5:2

Peter exhorted elders in their responsibilities. He provided a description of the attitude of spiritual leaders. Peter did not exalt himself over anyone. He put himself on the same level. This is a good example and was also the attitude of Paul. Paul pleaded with Philemon on the basis of love. Love is the only authority we have. We are to love others and encourage men on the basis of Christ's love.

Those who teach should also teach themselves. If a man desires to be an elder he desires a good work but it should not be for the purpose of lifting himself up above his brothers. Self exaltation is not the way of Jesus or the cross. The way of Calvary love and service is to humble ourselves under God's hand. The Christian way of ministry is to deal with others on the basis of love which means there can be no pride, position, prestige, or power given to church leaders.

Jesus told his disciples to love one another and serve one another in the same way he did. He demonstrated leadership by example and humility. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and this should be the attitude of spiritual leaders. Leaders are servants and slaves of all; they are appointed the job of washing the feet of the saints.

The first duty of an elder is feeding the flock of God. This duty is towards the flock near at hand. We are appointed a specific flock and are to feed that flock. If other flocks can benefit from the overflow well and good. The primary focus is on the flock of God among us. They are near at hand who need our help. There is a place for missions in God's plan. It is important but it is more important the flock at hand is fed and nourished first.

What are we to feed the flock? We feed them the bread of life and the living waters. We must feed them Jesus. This means the ministry of the word and it also includes the ministry of prayer. We must be steadfast in prayer and intercession or the ministry of the word will not have the power it needs to penetrate those who need to be fed.

It takes force of spirit and character to communicate so people can really hear the word. There are other spirits hard at work to stop the word of God from finding its mark in the heart of the believer and unbeliever alike.

Jesus told us that Satan will work hard to steal whatever word we preach. We must be willing to take the time to deliver a blow to the enemy in spiritual warfare before we ever open our mouths to teach the word of God.

Jacob overcame with the Lord before he met Esau face to face. He overcame by wrestling with God in prayer. He overcame and we must overcome in prayer as well.

The attitude of an elder has direct impact on the flock. People can tell if a man's heart is in the work. If we force ourselves to fulfill an obligation people feel it and they will not be inspired. In order for anyone to benefit we must not perform our duties under constraint but with a willing heart. People can sense a Pastor's attitude and they know if he is going through the motions or whether his heart is on fire for Jesus.

For those who receive financial support for their ministry there is always the need to evaluate motives for serving. It is so easy to think one deserves to be paid money for serving God.

Paul did say that the Lord ordained that those who labor in the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. This is true. But we must guard our hearts against doing this work for money or a paycheck.

It is the only job in the world where a man cannot allow himself to do the work for the money. There must be a higher motive than making money or earning a paycheck. If a man cannot bring himself to serve for a greater goal than compensation then he will fall to the level of a hireling. He will fall into the error and trap of Balaam. This kind of elder is a dangerous person because there is incredible opportunity to introduce the spirit of covetousness and idolatry into the church by men who serve for filthy lucre.

The reason for serving as elders is because of the Lord Jesus. We hear his voice. We love him because he first loved us. We believe what we do has eternal value and we are living for another world to come. Our goal is not this present life but for a much different kingdom. We should keep our hearts on Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith, and never allow ourselves to slip into an attitude of serving for money or position. We need to maintain, at all times, the heart of a volunteer who shows up each day because he wants to serve Jesus for no other reason than it is our calling and our reasonable service.

5:3

One mistake that men make entering ministry is that they do not grasp the importance of this verse in the Bible. It is incredible how much damage men do when they become lords over God's heritage. It is a devastating blow to the church when men take it on themselves to be lords over God's church. I would say more damage is done to the church by men who assert themselves as lords than even what unbelievers do from the outside. Church leaders are more dangerous than the most blasphemous atheist in doing real harm to the faith of Christians.

I made a commitment to Christ when I was fifteen years old. I was born again and filled with the Holy Spirit when I was 21 years old. This was in the year 1989 when I turned 21 years old. From then until now the number one stumbling block to my faith has not been atheists. My number one stumbling block was pastors and ministry leaders. These men did the most harm and damage to my faith. They caused me more pain than any unbeliever could ever hope to cause.

When I say this one scripture could completely change the church I am not making an understatement. I do not think I am alone in saying that I had more stumbling blocks to my faith from reverends than any other source. I say this with sadness and mourning. Not every single man in the church has been a stumbling block. There were some lowly, humble brothers who were a huge blessing to me.

In the Bible the Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of what this verse describes. He did not lord it over God's heritage but laid down his life for the sheep. He truly was the ultimate example of humility, love, and leading by example.

Another example in the Bible is David. Here was a man who did not assert himself or try to take over God's heritage but he let the Lord exalt him in due time. He humbled himself under the mighty hand of God and at the right time the Lord lifted him up so that he could feed the flock of God.

There is a reason Jesus taught his disciples not to call anyone "master, teacher, rabbi". He taught them to be brothers on level ground and not to exalt one over the other. He taught us to call no man "father" on this earth. Churches who do this employ the system and the principle of the world in their ministry and will burn with the fire of God's judgment at the appointed time.

Everything which can be shaken will be and only what is of the Lord will remain. Let us not build the church on the names of dead theologians but rather let us follow the example of Christ and only magnify our Father who is in heaven.

5:5-7

Here we see two different groups of people. One group of people are "the proud" and the other group of people are "the humble". One group God is against. The other group God gives grace to. I know which group I want to belong to.

What we don't realize is that to be in the humble group you will be looked down on and despised. Most people do not like a humble man. This is natural because the world system is based on pride, assertiveness, aggression. It is based on prestige, power, and position. People hate the humble man.

Pride is the chief characteristic of anyone really successful in the world. How can you tell if someone is successful in the world system? The easiest way to tell if someone is successful in the world is whether or not they have a lot of money. A rich man is almost without exception a man of power, position, prestige, and yes, pride. This is a man the Bible says that God resists. No wonder Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

I want to be humble. This means I will not do well in this world. My heart is not into achieving position and prestige within the system. The Lord may actually promote a humble man within the system, like the prophet Daniel, to achieve his purpose. This is the exception, however, and not the rule.

Even though I do not do well in the world God gives me grace. God gives grace to the humble. My heart's desire is to receive God's grace, and so I am willing to be put in a place where I can receive grace from God. The Lord will arrange a man's life so that he can stay humble and continue to receive grace upon grace. (**2 Corinthians 12:9**).

God's presence, his voice, and staying in his will are the most important things in life to the believer. Once a man has experienced the joy of God's presence then nothing the world has will ever be good enough. A man of God is ruined for this world.

As we have seen throughout 1 Peter the apostle taught about submission to authority. Here he exhorted younger men to submit to the elder and also everyone to submit to everyone else. The example of the Lord Jesus was submission to his heavenly Father.

As Christians we are to live a life of humility and submission. This submission is toward government, towards employers, towards family members, and towards our brothers and sisters in Christ. In every sphere of life the Christian is to have an attitude of submission and humility. This is the attitude to

maintain in order to continue to receive God's grace. God's grace enables us to live a life of love, a life of truth, to walk in the light, and to walk in the Spirit.

Remember also at the right time God will lift us up. There is a time coming when believers in Christ will be given authority over the nations to reign and rule with Christ in his kingdom. There is a time of authority in the future, but we must first learn the lesson of humility. (**Proverbs 18:12**).

As we endure this world with an attitude of humility we will suffer. People hate the man of humility. The Lord is on our side and we can cast all our cares on him. The Lord cares for us even though no one else does. The Lord does care for us and he will take care of us even to the end.

5:8-11

The Lord is taking us on a journey. On this journey there is a wild beast set loose who is looking for someone to devour. This beast is described as a lion. I used to keep a picture of a roaring lion on the desktop of my computer to remind me of this. I have an enemy who wants to kill, steal, and destroy. I must remember this and stay alert. I have to keep my mind sharp and be aware of what is happening around me.

This exhortation flies in the face of modern day American Christians who enjoy the opposite of staying sober. Christians today do not fear God or the devil. They are too busy enjoying the pleasures of this temporary life and do not have their mind set on things above. They are shocked when the enemy attacks them and mauls them.

I recently saw a news story of a man who was attacked by a bear. He barely survived the attack. What was unusual about this story, however, was that this was the second time the man was attacked by a bear on the same stretch of wilderness road. The reporter asked him if he would be going back to that road again for jogging and the man smiled and said, "No, I'm getting too old to fight off these bears..." This man, however, is a good example of the typical Christian today. They are attacked by the devil and keep going back to the same people, places, and things. Pride! They think somehow they are going to outsmart the lion and the bear.

The enemy attacks our brothers and sisters worldwide. We are not to become discouraged by this but instead realize that our suffering is not unusual. When hard times come, don't be dismayed, but realize we are in good company. Suffering is nothing new to Christians. We've been suffering and dying for 2,000 years and will continue to do so until Jesus returns.

Hallelujah, the Lord will return. He will return and will make us perfect. We will be given a new body that is not subject to sin, disease, or death. In our new bodies we will reign and rule with Jesus. The Lord will settle us. We will be given eternal homes, and will no longer wander this sin cursed world of suffering. Praise God, our journey will be over.